

Benefits of Breastfeeding

Human milk is uniquely suited for human infants



- Human milk is easy to digest and contains all the nutrients that babies need in the early months of life.
- Factors in breast milk protect infants from a wide variety of illnesses.
- Fatty acids, unique to human milk, may play a role in infant brain and visual development.
- In several large studies, children who had been breastfed had a small advantage over those who have not been breastfed when given a variety of cognitive and neurological tests, including measures of IQ.

Breastfeeding saves lives

- Lack of breastfeeding is a risk factor for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Human milk may protect premature infants from life-threatening gastrointestinal disease.

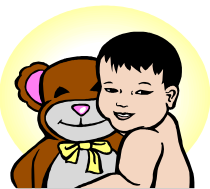
Breastfed infants are healthier

- Infants who are exclusively breastfed for at least 4 months, are half as likely as infants who are not breastfed to have ear infections in the first year of life.
- Breastfeeding reduces the incidence, and lessens the severity of a large number of bacterial infections, including meningitis.
- Breastfeeding protects against a variety of illnesses, such as diarrhea and infant botulism.
- Evidence suggests that exclusive breastfeeding for at least two months protects susceptible children from Type I insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (DDM).
- Breastfeeding may reduce the risk for subsequent inflammatory bowel disease, multiple sclerosis and childhood lymphoma.



Breastfeeding helps mothers recover from childbirth

- Breastfeeding helps the uterus to shrink to its pre-pregnancy state and reduces the amount of blood lost after delivery.
- Mothers who breastfeed for at least 3 months may lose more weight than mothers who do not breastfeed.
- Breastfeeding mothers usually resume their menstrual cycles 20 to 30 weeks later than mothers who do not breastfeed.



Breastfeeding keeps women healthier throughout their lives

- Breastfeeding can help in child spacing among women who do not use contraceptives (The Lactation Amenorrhea Method).
- Breastfeeding reduces the risk of breast and ovarian cancer.
- Breastfeeding may reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- During lactation, total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, and triglyceride levels decline while the beneficial HDL cholesterol level remains high.

Breastfeeding is economical

- The cost of infant formula has increased 150 percent since the 1980's.
- Breastfeeding reduces health care costs.



Breastfeeding is environmentally sound



- Unlike infant formula, breastfeeding requires no fossil fuels for its manufacture or preparation.
- Breastfeeding reduces pollutants created as by-products during the manufacture of plastics for bottles and metal for cans to contain infant formula.
- Breastfeeding reduces the burden on our landfills, as there are no cans to throw away.